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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1065
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0087
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2090
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0759
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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0187
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0099
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [MCAP](#) [SOCI](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS DISCUSSES
COUNTERTERRORISM

Classified By: Poloff Steven Prohaska for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) Summary: Poloff met with officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) on December 4 to discuss counterterrorism issues. After an overview of the history of counterterrorism efforts in Uzbekistan, the officials outlined the MVD's priorities and responded to Poloff's questions, often avoiding specifics. They also cited the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as being among Uzbekistan's key partners in counterterrorism efforts. Officials appeared reluctant to share specific information, and the meeting affirmed the leading role of the National Security Service (NSS) in many counterterrorism matters. End summary.

12. (C) Poloff met with officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) on December 4 to discuss counterterrorism issues. MVD officials present included Dilshod Babajanov (ethnic Uzbek), Chief of the Ministry's Counterterrorism Department; Lt. Col. Petrochenko (ethnic Russian), Chief of the Department's Counterterrorism Section; and Lt. Col. Mukhamedov (ethnic Tajik), Chief of the Analytical Section.

13. (C) Reading from typed documents laid out in front of him (standard MVD practice), Babajanov said that terrorism in Uzbekistan first appeared in the 1990s, and that there was no effective coordination of law enforcement bodies then due to conflicting responsibilities among these. This situation had improved, he remarked, thanks to the adoption of President Karimov's "Law on the Struggle Against Terrorism" of December 15, 2001, which delineated responsibilities of the various Ministries and outlined the main principles of their counterterrorism efforts. Babajanov said that the GOU grants amnesty annually for some prisoners convicted of involvement with terrorism. He said that the Government of Uzbekistan's (GOU's) counterterrorism efforts could threaten the rights of the country's citizens, but it was implementing measures--including the improvement of the legal system--to protect human rights. The GOU relies heavily on mahalla

(neighborhood) committees to fight terrorism and to take preventive measures in the provinces, he noted. The National Security Service (NSS) coordinates the activity of law enforcement bodies, and the results have not been bad--"it's working," Babajanov said, knocking on his desk.

14. (C) Babajanov said the MVD is focusing on four primary areas at the working level: cutting off terrorist finances; reforming legislation; improving coordination with other law enforcement bodies; and promoting joint efforts with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and other countries. In response to a question about whether terrorist methods were changing, Petrochenko initially dodged the question, then said that terrorists were putting more effort into hiding their actions from the authorities these days and were trying to pursue new methods.

15. (C) When asked about which countries provide the most counterterrorism assistance to Uzbekistan, Babajanov said that all countries that face the threat of terrorism help. He cited the SCO, CSTO, and Commonwealth of Independent States in particular, but would not elaborate on the nature of the assistance or differences in the level of assistance provided by these countries. Babajanov suggested that Poloff speak with MFA about this issue.

16. (C) In response to a question about which terrorist groups were active in Uzbekistan, Petrochenko said he couldn't say, but said that the number of extremist groups has declined over the past ten years. (Comment: It is unclear whether he meant he did not know or whether he was not allowed to discuss it. End comment.) Lt. Col. Mukhamedov said that his

section was analyzing appropriate information each day and was pursuing numerous methods to combat terrorism. As the meeting ended, one MVD official who escorted Poloff out advised him to meet with the NSS to discuss counterterrorism further.

17. (C) Comment: Although the officials present were generally friendly, the MVD's responses were vague. This could be due both to MVD officers' having to receive approval from their higher-ups on the substance of their remarks, as well as MVD's relative lack of counterterrorism interaction with Embassy staff in recent years. Nevertheless, the MVD is at least willing to sit down with us to discuss these issues. The meeting also reinforces our perception that the NSS has the lead role in the GOU on counterterrorism matters.
NORLAND